

They complain that junior officers and enlisted men and women with families are assigned to military housing that is old and badly maintained. On many bases both here and abroad, there is a shortage of housing, forcing many young families to live off the base. Civilian landlords in neighborhoods near military bases often charge above-market rents because they know military families are a captive market.

Deployments to far-off "peace-keeping" missions are another reason for mid-career attrition. With all of the services short-handed, assignments to these hardship missions are far more frequent than in the past. Moreover, to soldiers who have been trained to fight, many of these peacekeeping missions seem pointless.

But the complaint I've heard as often as any other has been about the system for advancement. One former officer told me that the military's traditional "zero defects" policy now applies to careers, not just to the readiness of a unit or to effectiveness in combat. One bad rating from a senior officer can end a career. "Everyone seems afraid to take the slightest chance at making a mistake," he said, for fear of getting a bad review.

So the mid-level officers may be jumping ship because the solution—which would include dissolving the unfair ratings system—is too radical to ever be considered.

Dissatisfaction with the overall ratings system for officers also helps to explain why the 20 percent increase in retirement benefits called for in the Senate bill is unlikely to improve retention rates. There are fewer slots as you go higher in rank, so promotions get harder.

In the past, for example, a major who wasn't promoted to lieutenant colonel could stay at the same rank and still get full retirement benefits after 20 years of service. Now many of those who don't get promoted are asked to leave the military.

The new officer rating system, established a year ago, has rigorous quotas that insure that only a certain number of soldiers are promoted—and reach retirement age. The ratings system uses four levels, but no more than half of the soldiers a superior officer oversees can be given the top rating. Soldiers who consistently score at the top are the ones who will qualify for retirement benefits, the bulk of which kick in at 20 years of service.

But that means the other half has little or no chance of qualifying for retirement, and it's this group that is more likely to resign from the service at mid-career. Several former military men have told me that after receiving what they considered to be unfair low ratings as junior officers they drew the conclusion that they would never be able to serve 20 years and reach retirement. Each of them decided to resign early rather than stick around and learn late in his career that his services were no longer wanted by the military.

"They tell you that if you're not going to go all the way to 20, you'd better get out by the end of your eighth year, because the corporate world won't take you after that," one former soldier explained.

Many former soldiers I have corresponded with have described their decisions to resign from the military as complex and painful. But the emotion they express most frequently is anger.

"I think the most important reason for leaving is that the Army pays lip service to taking care of its own, but it really doesn't," one former officer wrote.

Still another former military man described the plight of the mid-career professional soldier this way: "They are sent to far-off places with inadequate support, point-

less missions and foolish rules of engagement so the cocktail party set back in D.C. . . . can have their consciences feel good."

Many of the military men and women I've interviewed see no one in senior leadership positions standing up and telling the politicians that while a pay raise is nice, there are a lot of other problems that need to be addressed. As one former officer wrote me, "Money would help, but it will not cure."●

NATIONAL TRIO DAY

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to bring my colleagues attention to the celebration of National TRIO Day which took place on Saturday, February 28. National TRIO Day—which was created by a concurrent resolution during the 99th Congress—is celebrated every year on the last Saturday of February, and serves as a day of recognition for the Federal TRIO Programs.

As my colleagues are aware, the TRIO Programs actually consist of several educational programs: Talent Search; Upward Bound; Upward Bound Math/Science; Veterans Upward Bound; Student Support Services; Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program; and Educational Opportunity Centers. These programs, established over 30 years ago, provide services to low-income students and help them overcome a variety of barriers to obtaining a higher education, including class, social, and cultural barriers.

Currently, 2,000 colleges, universities and community agencies sponsor TRIO Programs, and more than 780,000 low-income middle school, high school, and adult students benefit from the services of these programs. By lifting students out of poverty, these students can pursue their highest aspirations and achieve the American dream, even as our nation is collectively lifted to new heights.

Mr. President, there are 15 TRIO Programs in my home State of Maine that serve 6,000 aspiring students each year. I know that these programs work because I have seen and heard of the tangible impact the programs have had—and continue to have—on individuals in Maine.

The impact of the TRIO Programs speaks for itself when considering that TRIO graduates can be found in every occupation one can think of, including doctors, lawyers, astronauts, television reporters, actors, state senators, and even Members of Congress. In fact, two of our colleagues in the House of Representatives—Congressman HENRY BONILLA and Congressman ALBERT R. WYNN—are graduates of the TRIO Programs.

In closing, as we celebrate National TRIO Day, I would like to encourage my colleagues to learn more about the TRIO Programs in their respective states, and see for themselves the impact the programs have had—and continue to have—on their constituents. Ensuring that all of our nation's students who desire a higher education are able to attain it is a goal that I think we can all agree on—and TRIO makes it possible.●

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. RES. 51 AND S. RES. 52

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed en bloc to the immediate consideration of Senate resolutions 51 and 52, which are on the calendar.

I further ask consent that the resolutions be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROVIDING FOR MEMBERS ON THE PART OF THE SENATE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING AND THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the first resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 51) providing for members on the part of the Senate of the Joint Committee on Printing and the Joint Committee on the Library.

The resolution was considered and agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 51

Resolved, That the following-named Members be, and they are hereby, elected members of the following joint committees of Congress:

Joint Committee on Printing: Mitch McConnell, Thad Cochran, Don Nickles, Dianne Feinstein, and Daniel K. Inouye.

Joint Committee on the Library: Ted Stevens, Mitch McConnell, Thad Cochran, Christopher J. Dodd, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

AUTHORIZING THE PRINTING OF A COLLECTION OF THE RULES OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the second resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 52) to authorize the printing of a collection of the rules of the committees on the Senate.

The resolution was considered and agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 52

Resolved, That a collection of the rules of the committees of the Senate, together with related materials, be printed as a Senate document, and that there be printed 600 additional copies of such document for the use of the Committee on Rules and Administration.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 350

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I understand that H.R. 350 is at the desk. I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 350) to improve Congressional deliberation on proposed Federal private sector mandates, and for other purposes.

Mr. ALLARD. I now ask for its second reading and would object to my own request.